

## Message Text

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ACTION EUR-08

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSC-05 NSCE-00 SAM-01

INR-05 INRE-00 CIAE-00 PM-03 L-01 AF-04 SP-02 PRS-01

/045 W

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O R 260935Z AUG 75

FM AMEMBASSY LISBON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3951

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MADRID

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM

USMISSION NATO

DIA WASHDC

USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GER

C O N F I D E N T I A L LISBON 4926

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT PO

SUBJ: FABIAO CEASES EFFORT AT FORMING NEW GOVERNMENT

SUMMARY: EMBASSY UNDERSTANDS FROM RELIABLE SOURCE THAT GEN FABIAO HAS GIVEN UP HIS EFFORT TO FORM NEW GOVERNMENT. BOTH FABIAO AND OTELO ARE NOW SYMPATHETIC BYSTANDERS RATHER THAN PARTICIPANTS IN ATTEMPT TO PUSH OUT GONCALVES. JORNAL NOVO REPORTS THAT NAVY CHIEF AZEVEDO HAS BEEN ASKED BY PRESIDENT TO FORM NEW GOVERNMENT. ANTUNES FORCES ARE REPORTEDLY DISHEARTENED AND WAY MAY BE OPEN FOR PREEMPTIVE PUTSCH BY GONCALVES AND HIS COMMUNIST ALLIES. SOURCE OF THIS REPORT HAS BEEN OVERLY PESSIMISTIC IN PAST, BUT TEMPORIZING BY COSTA GOMES IS CERTAINLY TAKING ITS TOLL AND THE TIDE, OR AT LEAST THE PSYCHOLOGICAL ATMOSPHERE, COULD BE TURNING AGAINST MELO ANTUNES AND CO. END SUMMARY

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1. A RELIABLE SOURCE IN SOCIALIST PARTY TOLD US THAT GEN FABIAO HAS CEASED HIS EFFORTS TO FORM A SIXTH PROVISIONAL GOVERNMENT AND THAT COPCON COMMANDER GEN OTELO CARVALHO IS NO LONGER ACTIVELY PARTICIPATING IN THE EFFORT TO OUST THE PRIME MINISTER. BOTH OTELO AND FABIAO CONTINUE TO SYMPATHIZE WITH THE MELO ANTUNES GROUP--BUT AS INTERESTED BYSTANDERS RATHER THAN PARTICIPANTS.

2. THIS DEVELOPMENT, ACCORDING TO OUR SOURCE, HAS DISHEARTENED THE ANTUNES GROUP AND COULD LEAD THE WAY TO PREEMPTIVE PUTSCH BY GONCALVES AND HIS COMMUNIST ALLIES. FIRST STEP IN PUTSCH WOULD BE ARREST OF PRESIDENT. PRESIDENT IS APPARENTLY AWARE OF THIS POSSIBILITY AND HAS INCREASED THE GUARD AT HIS BELEM PALACE. BECAUSE OF HIS CONCERN OVER THE RELIABILITY OF THE MILITARY POLICE GUARDING FORT SAO JULIAO, WHICH THE PRESIDENT HAS BEEN USING FOR HIGH LEVEL MEETINGS AND AS WEEKEND RETREAT, COSTA GOMES DECIDED TO REMAIN AT HIS BELEM QUARTERS, AND DISCONTINUE USE OF SAO JULIAO.

3. PCP MILITIAS: ADDING TO CONCERN OF ANTUNES GROUP IS COMPLETION BY PCP OF FORMATION OF 3500 MAN ARMED MILITIA IN THE LISBON AREA. ANTUNES SUPPORTERS ARE SO IMPRESSED WITH PCP STRENGTH IN LISBON THAT THEY HAVE DECIDED IN EVENT OF ARMED CONFLICT TO ABANDON LISBON AND RELY ON STRATEGY OF SURROUNDING AND STARVING OUT CITY RATHER THAN MAKING DIRECT CHALLENGE TO COMMUNIST MILITIA AND ARMY UNITS SUCH AS LISBON LIGHT ARTILLERY REGT (RALIS) AND MILITARY POLICE THAT MIGHT SUPPORT GONCALVES IN A CONFRONTATION.

4. JORNAL NOVO, (JN) WHICH HAS INSIDE LINE TO ANTUNES GROUP, ALSO REPORTS IN AUG 26 EDITION THAT FABIAO HAS CEASED HIS EFFORTS TO FORM NEW GOVERNMENT. JN ADDS THAT NAVY CHIEF PIHEIRO AZEVEDO (A PRESIDENTIAL CRONY) MAY HAVE BEEN ASKED TO TAKE ON THE TASK OF FORMING A GOVERNMENT AND THAT DIRECTORY VOTED TO READMIT ANTUNES NINE TO REVOLUTIONARY COUNCIL. GONCALVES IS SAID TO HAVE OPPOSED THE RETURN OF THE NINE.

5. COMMENT: DEPARTURE OF INDECISIVE FABIAO AND IDEOLOGICALLY CONFUSED OTELO FROM ACTIVE COOPERATION WITH ANTUNES GROUP SHOULD NOT BE SURPRISING. CONTINUED TEMPORIZING BY COSTA GOMES AND STEADY DRUMBEAT OF COMMUNIST PROPAGANDA DIRECTED AT CREATING

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DIVISIONS WITHIN MELO ANTUNES CAMP IS CERTAINLY TAKING ITS TOLL. WHILE REPORTED CONTINUED OPTIMISM OF MELO ANTUNES MUST BE TAKEN WITH SOME SKEPTICISM, THIS PARTICULAR CONTACT SEEMS TO BE OVERLY PESSIMISTIC. HE IS VERY CLOSE TO SOARES, WHO HIMSELF IS MOODY, AND OUR CONTACT HAS WARNED OF COMMUNIST POWER PLAYS BEFORE. HE MAY BE RIGHT THIS TIME BUT THE THOUGHT THAT GONCALVES WOULD MOVE AGAINST COSTA GOMES, WHO HAS SAVED HIM FROM OUSTER DOESN'T RING TRUE. ALSO, IN THE PRESENT ATMOSPHERE THE SOCIALISTS ARE UNABLE

FOR SECURITY REASONS TO MAINTAIN THE CONTACTS WITH MELO ANTUNES  
THEY HAD BEFORE; THEY MAY NOT HAVE ALL THE FACTS. NEVERTHELESS  
WE ARE CONCERNED THAT THE TIMDE OR AT LEAST THE PSYCHOLOGICAL  
ATMOSPHERE, COULD BE TURNING AGAINST MELO ANTUNES & CO.  
CARLUCCI

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## Message Attributes

**Automatic Decaptioning:** Z  
**Capture Date:** 01 JAN 1994  
**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Concepts:** GOVERNMENT REFORM, POLITICAL SITUATION  
**Control Number:** n/a  
**Copy:** SINGLE  
**Draft Date:** 26 AUG 1975  
**Decaption Date:** 28 MAY 2004  
**Decaption Note:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Action:** RELEASED  
**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
**Disposition Authority:** RowellE0  
**Disposition Case Number:** n/a  
**Disposition Comment:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Date:** 28 MAY 2004  
**Disposition Event:**  
**Disposition History:** n/a  
**Disposition Reason:**  
**Disposition Remarks:**  
**Document Number:** 1975LISBON04926  
**Document Source:** CORE  
**Document Unique ID:** 00  
**Drafter:** n/a  
**Enclosure:** n/a  
**Executive Order:** GS  
**Errors:** N/A  
**Film Number:** D750295-0687  
**From:** LISBON  
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**Office:** ACTION EUR  
**Original Classification:** CONFIDENTIAL  
**Original Handling Restrictions:** LIMDIS  
**Original Previous Classification:** n/a  
**Original Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Page Count:** 3  
**Previous Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Previous Classification:** CONFIDENTIAL  
**Previous Handling Restrictions:** LIMDIS  
**Reference:** n/a  
**Review Action:** RELEASED, APPROVED  
**Review Authority:** RowellE0  
**Review Comment:** n/a  
**Review Content Flags:**  
**Review Date:** 28 MAY 2003  
**Review Event:**  
**Review Exemptions:** n/a  
**Review History:** RELEASED <28 MAY 2003 by ShawDG>; APPROVED <08 OCT 2003 by RowellE0>  
**Review Markings:**

Margaret P. Grafeld  
Declassified/Released  
US Department of State  
EO Systematic Review  
06 JUL 2006

**Review Media Identifier:**  
**Review Referrals:** n/a  
**Review Release Date:** n/a  
**Review Release Event:** n/a  
**Review Transfer Date:**  
**Review Withdrawn Fields:** n/a  
**Secure:** OPEN  
**Status:** NATIVE  
**Subject:** FABIAO CEASES EFFORT AT FORMING NEW GOVERNMENT SUMMARY: EMBASSY UNDERSTANDS FROM RELIABLE SOURCE THAT GEN FABIAO  
**TAGS:** PINT, PO  
**To:** STATE  
**Type:** TE  
**Markings:** Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 06 JUL 2006